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REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 2-6 and 10-13 recite allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this early indication of allowable subject matter. Applicants have rewritten claims 2, 10, 11, and 13 in independent form thereby placing claims 2-6 and 10-13 in condition for allowance.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 4-6 and 23-25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph; rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,950,058 issued to Kakii et al.; rejected claims 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,134,360 issued to Cheng et al.; rejected claims 14 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,322,256 issued to Inada et al.; rejected claims 15-17, 19, and 23-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Inada et al.; and rejected claims 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,433,924 issued to Sommer in view of Chen et al.

By this Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1 and 7-9 without prejudice, have amended claims 2, 4-6, 10-18, and 23-25 in order to more clearly define the present invention, and have added new claim 26 to claim additional features of the present invention. Claims 2-6 and 10-26 are now pending.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for his time and courtesy during a telephone interview conducted on July 14, 2003. During the interview, claims 1, 3-6, 9, 14, 18, and 23-25 were discussed. The prior art discussed included Inada et al., Boscher et al., and Shahid. No exhibits were shown or discussed. Applicants proposed amendments to claims 4-6, 14, 18, and 23-25. Amendments proposed for claims 4-6 and 23-25 addressed the concerns raised by the Examiner relative to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The Examiner indicated that such amendments would likely overcome the rejections of these claims. Applicants proposed an amendment to claim 14 whereby the references to "ovality" and diameter would be removed from claim 14. The Examiner indicated that such an amendment would likely overcome the rejection of claims 14. Applicants also proposed an amendment to claim 18 whereby the phrases "a rounded square," "a rounded rectangle," and "a two-wafer type formed from two wafers comprising matching grooves which form capillaries when the wafers are aligned" were removed. The Examiner indicated that such

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an amendment would appear to overcome the rejection of claim 18, which was based on Inada et al. The general thrust of Applicants' principle arguments is discussed further below.

Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 4-6 and 23-25 meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kakii et al. Although Applicants do not agree with the Examiner's rejection of independent claim 1, Applicants have elected to cancel claim 1 in order to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 7- 9 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cheng et al. Although Applicants do not agree with the Examiner's rejection of claims 7-9, Applicants have elected to cancel claims 7-9 in order to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 14 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Inada et al. for the reasons stated below.

With respect to independent claim 14, Inada et al. fails to disclose a method of assembling a fiber ferrule subassembly comprising the steps of: providing a ferrule comprising at least one capillary extending axially through the ferrule; providing a plurality of optical fibers screened for at least core concentricity; and inserting the plurality of fibers through the at least one capillary. Specifically, Inada et al. does not disclose nor recognize any method of screening fibers for core concentricity.

With respect to independent claim 18, Inada et al. fails to disclose a method of assembling a fiber ferrule for an optical assembly comprising the steps of: providing a fiber ferrule comprising at least one capillary extending axially through the ferrule, and wherein the at least one capillary is selected from the group consisting of a dual-oval capillary, a four-circular capillary, and a capillary comprising an alignment washer; providing a plurality of optical fibers; inserting the fibers through the at least one capillary; applying adhesive to the fibers; and curing the adhesive. As noted above, the specific amendment made to claim 18 was discussed during the interview with the Examiner agreeing that Inada et al. fails to disclose a capillary that is so configured. Claim 18 is therefore allowable over Inada et al.

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Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 15-17, 19, and 23-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Inada et al. Claims 15-17 depend from claim 14 and are allowable for at least those reasons stated with respect to claim 14. Claims 19 and 23-25 depend from independent claim 18 and are allowable for at least those reasons stated with respect to claim 18.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sommer in view of Cheng et al. Applicants submit that claims 20-22, which depend from independent claim 18, are allowable for at least the reasons stated above with respect to claim 18. Neither Boscher et al. nor Shahid teaches or suggests the features of claim 18.

New independent claim 26 is similar to independent claim 14 except that the fibers are screened for ovality rather than core concentricity. Inada et al. does not disclose nor recognize any method of screening fibers for ovality.

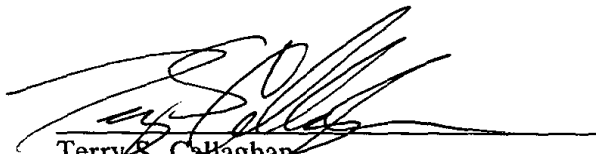
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the present invention, as defined by the pending claims, is allowable over the prior art of record. The Examiner's reconsideration and timely allowance of the claims is requested. A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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